



Board of Selectmen

Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street

Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, January 22, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Selectman John E. Carroll, Selectman Michael P. Fountain, Selectman Keith J. Kruckas, Selectman Alan G. Whitney, Town Manager Stuart Beckley, Ware Community TV General Manager Stanley Ciukaj

Absent: Selectman Tracy R. Opalinski, Clerk Mary L. Midura

Meeting Opened by Chairman Carroll

Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair

Chairman Carroll noted the new business SubaGuru, formerly Gervais, open and will receive inspection license. He noted that some residents have blown snow into the street, which is illegal. He stated that some gas prices on the MA turnpike were lower than Ware, and requested a letter sent to Ware gas station owners. Selectman Whitney noted \$2.11 in Springfield.

Consent Agenda - none

Scheduled Appearances - none

New Business

- **Request to Forward Zoning Amendment to Planning Board**

Mr. Beckley noted the request to change parcels on South Street from Downtown Commercial (DTC) to Mill Yard (MY) to allow broader industrial use, manufacturing, cultivation of marijuana. Planning Board Chairman Rick Starodoj noted that the request must have a public hearing, then go to town meeting for a vote. Selectman Kruckas has further questions of the owner.

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to table this to January 29, 2019; Selectman Whitney seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Opalinski).

- **Reappointment to Community Development Authority: Tracy Opalinski, Term to Expire June 30, 2021**

Selectman Kruckas noted possible conflicts and selectman on too many boards/committees; Selectman Whitney noted this applies to all Selectmen.

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to table to February 5, 2019; Selectman Whitney seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Opalinski).

- **Set Public Hearing for 7:10 p.m., Tuesday, February 5, 2019 for FY19 CDBG**
Selectman Whitney made the motion to Set the Public Hearing for 7:10 p.m. on Tuesday, February 5, 2019, Amended to February 19, 2019; Selectman Fountain seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Opalinski).

Chairman Carroll noted many open positions in the next election. Nomination papers are available.

Old Business

- **Site Visit Form**

Andrew Choquette, Building Department Assistant, presented information on the Town software Viewpoint. He noted that the software is only utilized at this time by the Building Department. For unkempt properties, the system does tracking, certified mail, and work flow. Records are triggered by the Building Department, and the public can view but not edit information. The license covers the Building Department (including Conservation) only. The system keeps track of notices and monitors completion of workflow steps. The Town paid \$10,000 for current use, and the cost is an additional \$3,000 to add other departments. The site visit form is part of the online system. Selectman Kruckas noted this is more efficient, and Selectman Whitney noted increased transparency. The request for additional funds will be on the March 11, 2019 Special Town Meeting warrant.

- **Discussion to Hire Investigator to Begin Fire Department Reviews**

Chairman Carroll noted there are a couple of investigators to consider, with a question of price. Selectman Kruckas noted that calls have gone out to companies. Selectman Whitney questioned if the full investigation can be done and the need to do it right. Selectman Kruckas noted there is enough money to get started, and the sooner the better. If additional funds are needed, Mr. Beckley noted a placeholder on the Special Town Meeting warrant.

Comments and Concerns of Citizens

Resident Cathy Cascio questioned if the payment has been paid back (fire department); Selectman Whitney explained that the investigation must be done first. Ms. Cascio questioned if the letter from TIF Committee was sent to G & G Medical; Selectman Whitney noted that the TIF Committee has not recently held a meeting.

Town Manager Report

Upcoming dates:

January 24 – Planning Board Meeting – Zoning recommendations

January 24 – East Quabbin Land Trust, Solar Discussion, New Braintree

February 19 – CDBG Public Hearing

The DPW will be removing snow from the Main Street area tonight.

Budgets are due from departments on January 28. Annual reports and Town Meeting articles are due on January 31.

Mr. St. George Sorel will attend the Selectmen's February 5 meeting to update the board on DPW projects.

Grants – The Town is working on several grants. The Community Development Authority held its first hearing on the CDBG application. The preliminary intent is to include social services, housing rehabilitation and a code enforcement position. The Town will file a joint application with Hardwick. The Town is working on two bike trail grants. One will improve the southern sections of the Ware River Valley trail by adding signage, screening and stone dust surfacing. The other will plan the feasibility of trails connecting Ware to Palmer and points east and west. Additionally, the Chicopee Watershed Council is seeking funding to assist with the creation of a Blue Trail which will provide access to the section of the Ware River below the Dam to Thorndike. Finally, the Town will seek funds for a structural survey for the Town Hall from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Mass Municipal Association Annual Meeting. The Governor confirmed that the Unrestricted Local Aid will increase by 2.7% for fiscal 2020. For Ware, this means an increase of \$48,000. There was very little discussion of any changes to the formula for Chapter 70, school spending. The Governor’s budget will be issued later this week.

Preliminary discussions with Blue Cross Blue Shield (health insurance) and MIA (liability) indicate that any insurance increase this year will be modest. Specific rates should arrive in early February.

Hot topics include solar growth and creating communities that are designed for all ages, and allowing residents to age in their homes. The social media training was helpful. Additionally, I met with vendors regarding streetlights for Main Street, bylaw updating, and fiscal software.

New Police vehicle. Currently out for installation of lights and accessories.



Selectman Kruckas asked Mr. Beckley the status of the Town Planner position and DPW Director position; Mr. Beckley noted applicants were not adequate, and both positions are now posted on Indeed.com for broader advertising. Selectman Kruckas noted concerns of so much building and development and it is crucial to have a Planning Department with availability. Chairman Carroll suggested other towns may be willing to share a planner.

Selectman Kruckas questioned the heating system status; Mr. Beckley noted the survey, but no Green Communities funds will be available in 2019 due to the LED lights will not be completely installed by January 31st. The installer had to switch out parts. The State showed no sympathy, so the Town must wait to apply again in 2020.

Chairman Carroll asked Mr. Beckley if there are articles submitted for the Special Town Meeting; Mr. Beckley noted there are several submitted articles.

Reporter Jim Russell questioned the audits of departments, start and end dates of the Fire Department audit, are any audits due to suspicions or malfeasance. Selectman Whitney noted that one department would be audited each year, beginning first with the Fire Department as soon as possible, using the \$15,000 appropriated, with decisions how in depth to go. Selectman Kruckas explained that companies will be called to research the costs and depth of proposed audits.

At 7:56 p.m., Selectman Whitney made the motion to Adjourn Regular Meeting to go into Executive Session: MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) #2 Negotiations, #3 Litigation, NOT TO RETURN TO OPEN MEETING; Selectman Fountain seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Opalinski).

Attest: *Mary L. Midura*
Mary L. Midura, Executive Assistant
Minutes Via Videotape from Ware Community TV